

Medicaid Eligibility for Foster Care and Adoption

A child in foster care is eligible for at least one year of Medicaid coverage if they remain in care. A child in foster care in the month they turn 18 can be approved for Medicaid until age 26 as a former foster child if they are not already eligible in a different category. A child returned home or adopted before turning 18 will require a separate eligibility determination within a year to determine continuing eligibility.

When a child is adopted, a separate decision is required to determine eligibility based on the type of adoption. The decision may require just a copy of the adoption agreement, or an application may also be needed. As long as the adoption agreement is in effect, the child remains eligible for Medicaid coverage until turning age 18 or age 21 at the discretion of the Department of Social Services. These cases do not require an annual review.

Even though we do not review children eligible for adoption Medicaid annually, there may be instances when a review form including the child is sent. This may occur if there are other Medicaid-eligible individuals in the home. Even though eligibility for the adopted child does not require review, the child may be part of the eligibility decision of another household member. Another reason for a review form is missing information necessary for coverage to continue, such as a Social Security Number.

With the end of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, Medicaid agencies are required to review eligibility for all members. Based on the resumption of the eligibility review process that has been suspended for the past three years, it is also possible the review was sent in error.

Case-specific information is needed to identify and address why the review was received. Detailed questions about the review can be directed to annualreviews@scdhhs.gov, and someone will be able to research the case and provide direction on what is needed. If the review was sent in error, this can also be addressed to help ensure the child maintains eligibility.